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Washington, DC— Today, U.S. Representative Steve Israel (D-NY) announced House passage of legislation that recognizes the contributions of the New York-based "Fighting 69th" as the regiment prepares to deploy to Afghanistan. The "Fighting 69th" is best known as one of the first Army units to assist in the recovery effort after the September 11th terrorist attacks and for participating in the "Task Force Wolfhound" operation in Iraq. This legislation is expected to pass the House later this evening.

"The Fighting 69th has never been short on valor, a tradition that will continue as the unit prepares to deploy to Afghanistan to defend our country on the frontlines of our fight against terror," said Congressman Israel (D-NY), who met with the members of the Fighting 69th for lunch before they headed to Fort Bragg for pre-deployment training. "These brave New Yorkers, who were among the first servicemembers assisting in recovery efforts after the September 11 terrorist attacks, will now travel to Afghanistan, where the attacks were masterminded. This regiment has earned our respect and recognition and I hope my colleagues in Congress will join me in honoring them with this resolution."

The 69th Infantry Regiment, known as the Fighting 69th, is composed of citizen-soldiers from Brooklyn, Queens, Manhattan, the Bronx, Staten Island, and Long Island. The regiment was formed in 1851 and is known for being one of the first units to assist in the recovery effort at the World Trade Center in New York following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack.

In 2004, the Fighting 69th Infantry Regiment was sent overseas for the first time since World War II as part of "Task Force Wolfhound" in Iraq. During this deployment they fought al-Qaeda terrorists in the city of Al Taji, protected Iraq's first free elections, and secured the infamous "Route Irish," the most dangerous road in Baghdad. 19 members of the Fighting 69th were killed in action and over 78 were wounded in Operation Wolfhound.

In January, the Fighting 69th left for two months of training in Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Later this month, they will be deployed to Afghanistan to assist with training of the Afghan National Army and Police Force.

In total, the Fighting 69th will have served in five wars including the Civil War, World War I, World War II, and Operation Iraqi Freedom and soon Operation Enduring Freedom. Congress has awarded six of its members with the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Israel's legislation, H. Res. 991, recognizes the Fighting 69th as one of the great regiments in American military history. It also recognizes the contributions of Fighting 69th to the Global War on Terror and acknowledges the 69th Infantry Regiment's upcoming deployment to Afghanistan. It passed the House unanimously on March 13, 2008.